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Subject: PSIO SITREP UPDATE #17 – 13 Feb 2022 – Freedom Convoy Solidarity Activity

PRELIMINARY INFORMATION ONLY: SUBJECT TO CHANGE AS SITUATION DEVELOPS. INFORMATION MAY BE BASED ON UNCONFIRMED REPORTING.

UPDATE #17

DATE/TIME: February 13, 2022 @ 12:10 hrs

PURPOSE: To provide aggregated situational awareness regarding "Freedom Convoy" solidarity activity impacting Alberta.

BACKGROUND: No change.

CURRENT STATUS:

Coutts Border Crossing & Milk River:

- As of 11:53 hrs, RCMP indicate current veh counts are:
 - COUTTS:
 - NB lanes: 23 semi-trucks, 1 personal vehicle, and 2 farm tractors.
 - SB lanes: 15 semi-trucks, and 2 personal vehicles.
 - SMUGGLERS SALOON (COUTTS):
 - 6 semi-trucks, 16 farm tractors, 4 personal vehicles, and 10 RVs.
 - CP 10:
 - 23 commercial vehicles, 98 RVs, approx. 221 passenger vehicles, and 11 farm tractors.
 - CP 5:
 - 8 RVs, 38 passenger vehicles, and 2 enclosed trailers attached to personal vehicles.
- As of 09:00 hrs 13 Feb, Sheriff Highway Patrol (SHP) report:

- SHP continues to provide support at CP-10 and Secondary Border points (DEL-BONITA & CARWAY).
- SHP encountered no significant events on 12 Feb.
- CHECKPOINT 10 near MILK RIVER had a “carnival-like” atmosphere throughout the day, until approx. 24:00 hrs. Crowd dispersed at midnight; some smaller groups were still active in the median ditch gathered around fire pits.
- SHP issued the following tickets on 12 Feb:
 - 18 unregistered vehicles;
 - 15 equipment violations;
 - 5 distracted driving; and
 - 2 speeding.
- Sheriffs continues to have two vans staged in MILK RIVER (1200-2200).
- As of 17:00 hrs Sat 12 Feb, RCMP and Sheriff Highway Patrol (SHP) report 2 x excavators have been observed to have been staged in field between CHECKPOINT 5 (TWP 12 & 11A) and CHECKPOINT 3 (TWP 12 & RGE 154). Equipment appears to be a [CASE CX350D](#) (Operating weight 82,483 lb | 37,414 kg) and [DEERE 200D LC](#) (operating weight 49,940 lb | 22,652 kg). [Intent unknown at this time. There does not appear to be any construction in the area that might explain the presence of this equipment. This location is consistent with the “back route” protesters have utilized to access COUTTS.]
- Videos posted to social media showed a large number of riders on horseback arriving at MILK RIVER on Sat 12 Feb. [number confirmation unavailable at this time]
- RCMP reporting indicates fundraising for the COUTTS blockade and support convoys has been initiated on GiveSendGo under “AB Coutts Convoy Restart”. Three fundraisers have been found on GiveSendGo with COUTTS in their title. All three have cumulatively raised \$260 at the time of writing.
- Messaging regarding the closure of the COUTTS border crossing remains contentious. Despite acknowledgement by protestors at the site that Freedom blockade participants have blocked the travel lanes, pro-Convoy supporters on social media who are not local to the blockade continue to claim that the road has been closed by police, not the Convoy. [This is likely a combination of a misunderstanding of the roles of CHECKPOINT 10 and 14 in preventing traffic from reaching the Convoy blockade, and deliberate disinformation that is attempting to evade criticism of the blockade at COUTTS for supply chain disruptions.]

Alberta Legislature / McDougall Centre

- No change.

City of Edmonton & Environs

- The CITY OF EDMONTON has obtained an interim [injunction](#) prohibiting the use of horns or noise making devices in the city from 11 Feb to 4 Mar.
- As of 18:58 hrs Sat 12 Feb, EPS report:
 - The convoy and protestors had completed their protests for the day.
 - EPS issued 10 tickets during the convoy and one warning.
 - EPS has identified 60 violations that they will issue tickets for by mail, including 9 for violating the injunction.

City of Calgary & Environs

- CPS report that a small pro-PHO protest was held at Premier KENNEY's constituency office on 12 Feb, with no issues.

Regional Municipalities / Rural

- RCMP reports that social media posts are publicizing ongoing protest events in FORT MCMURRAY. These include sledding in a public park, group shopping at Superstore on Mondays, and rallies at the courthouse on Saturdays.
- An attempt to charter a bus to bring people from FORT MCMURRAY to OTTAWA has failed due to lack of interest. The organizer has pushed the date back to 19 Feb.

Ottawa "Freedom Convoy 2022"

- Open source reporting indicates that large pro-Convoy Facebook groups who promoted the Ottawa Convoy were operated by the owner of a Bangladeshi digital marketing firm. When interviewed by different authors, the man consistently acknowledged he had operated the groups but provided contradictory reasons for doing so. Other reports have found that large Facebook groups promoting the convoy were operated by a hacked Facebook account. Meta has since removed all of these groups and stated that "We continue to see scammers latch onto any hot-button issue that draws people's attention, including the ongoing protests." Other large pro-Convoy groups remain active, and are operated by Canadian individuals who have appeared in person at events. [Message amplification on social media may have influenced the scale and temperature of the convoys, but attendance at events clearly indicates that the movement has grown from grassroots support.]

Other Provinces / National

- Windsor Police have announced the AMBASSADOR BRIDGE blockade was successfully cleared, and the bridge will be reopened to traffic on 13 Feb. Police made 12 arrests and towed 7-10 vehicles in the final hours of the operation with no use of force required and no violent response.
- Ontario police report that stores are selling out of bear spray (pepper spray), and protesters are purchasing toques that match the colour of the toques police were wearing during public order operations.

International

- Organization for a cross-USA convoy to WASHINGTON DC continues. Open source reporting indicates that similar inauthentic social media activity has been detected in pro-Convoy groups and posts.

MINISTRY UPDATES:

Justice & Solicitor General (JSG):

- JSG assisting with sourcing of equipment such as heavy wreckers, flat deck tow trucks, light tow trucks, and trailer/tow units. SHP members are currently transporting recently purchased equipment to a secured facility in Lethbridge.

Transportation (TRANS):

- No change.

Municipal Affairs:

- No change.

Jobs, Economy, and Innovation (JEI):

- No change.

Agriculture, Forestry, and Rural Economic Development (AFRED):

- No change.

ASSESSMENT & STRATEGIC CONSIDERATIONS:

- The counter-protest in Edmonton appears to have been a strategic success for the organizers, despite its limited impact on the convoy's movement through the city. Counter-protest organizers were able to demonstrate capability to disrupt, and their messaging that criticizes police and positions themselves as the only responsible actors appears to have resonated with their support base. It is likely that future Freedom protests in Edmonton will include a larger and more resolute counter-protest that will not comply with police direction as quickly.
- Social media marketing economies have grown around social media platforms, where entrepreneurial actors have developed methods to exploit content amplification for a profit. These techniques are not unique to the Freedom Convoy, and attendance numbers at events indicates that the movement retains real-world support regardless of social media manipulation.

FORECAST:

- Planning for recurrent events during weekend 19-20 Feb appear to be underway.

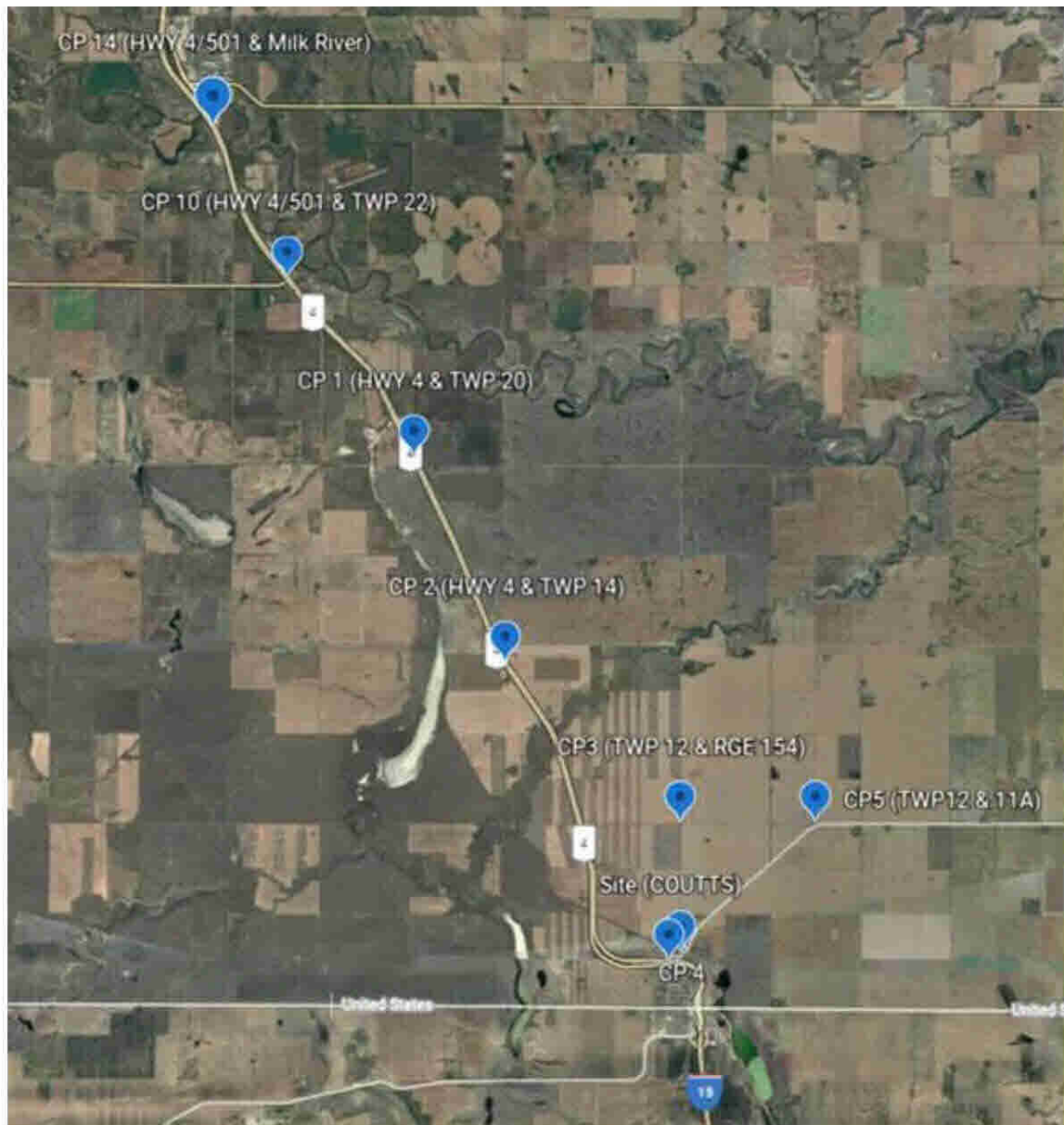
PREPARED BY: Intelligence Bureau, Provincial Security & Intelligence Office (PSIO)

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APPENDIX A: General Checkpoint Locations



Classification: Protected A

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